

Foreword

As I begin to write this Foreword, the fall quarter has just begun at Stanford and I have met the students enrolled in my course, *Issues in the Study of Bilingualism*, for the first time. The students are eager, interested, and many are dedicated to making a difference as future researchers and current and future teachers. In sharing their reasons for enrolling in the class, several students express the urgency of identifying best practices for designing dual language (bilingual) programs and two-way bilingual immersion programs, for teaching science, math, reading, and writing to English language learners, and for helping immigrant-origin students to close what appears to be an ever-widening achievement gap. There is little optimism expressed about schools' ability to make a difference in students' lives, and much concern about whether immigrant-origin children can actually be educated in U.S. schools as currently configured.

After introductions, I begin my brief lecture by talking about the shifts taking place in the field of bilingualism, about changing epistemologies, and about the excitement of moving forward by questioning the body of knowledge and the thinking that had informed us since *Languages in Contact* (Weinrich, 1979). From the questions my students ask, it is clear they have not yet heard about the *disinvention of languages* (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007), the *multilingual turn* (May, 2013), or *super-diversity* (Vertovec, 2007), and certainly not about *translanguaging* (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Canagarajah, 2011, 2013; García, 2011a & b, 2012, 2013, 2014; García & Li Wei, 2014; Li Wei, 2010, 2013). Most have heard about code-switching and disapprove of its use, some describe their own language use as Spanglish or Chinglish, and the majority of the class fully subscribes to a narrow definition of bilingualism in which bilinguals are seen as two monolinguals in one person. It is clear that there is much work to be done if I am to move them gently from their unexamined deficit views about the flaws that they believe characterize immigrant youngsters' language(s) to embracing the richness of their present and future multi-competence. It may be even more difficult to persuade my students that an intense focus on the teaching of bits and pieces of English and the exclusion of their home language in all intellectual activities may not benefit their students in developing their very fine minds.

I will do my best. I will require the class to read both foundational works as well as the new literature (about translanguaging, pluralism, metrolingualism, and transidiomatic practices). They will read about language ideologies, language variation, societal versus individual bilingualism, and the fuzzy boundaries of "named" languages. We will engage in extensive discussions of language and identity, multilingualism, multiculturalism, and new linguistic landscapes, and we will argue about the types of instructional arrangements that might sustain and support bilingualism across generations. They will (I hope) learn a great deal and possibly begin to question many strongly rooted beliefs and perspectives.

I am painfully aware, nevertheless, that my carefully selected readings will not change students' everyday teaching. If they are to link these new perspectives on bilingualism to a transformative practice that builds on what we now know about bilingualism, they will need to go beyond the existing theoretical and research literature. They will need to read and carefully study very different works, works that begin with theory and then invite teachers to explore new ways of thinking about language and new approaches in using "named" languages in classrooms to transform their practice. Ideally such books will describe (1) how new theories can be instituted in everyday classrooms with students who are multicompetent, (2) how youngsters' needs can be identified, and (3) how particular pedagogies can respond to different students' characteristics and strengths. Such books will also provide details about designing classroom practices that meet these different needs and about the types of pedagogies that can develop youngsters' subject matter knowledge and their linguistic repertoires.

The process of translating theory to pedagogical practice is a difficult one. Teachers cannot imagine what they have not seen. Once socialized into their disciplines and professional identities and accompanying language ideologies, they cannot change their practice unless they have a solid understanding of the alternatives. Teachers may agree that established approaches have been ineffective. However, moving from that conclusion to an actionable understanding of what to do and how to do it requires detailed descriptions of what steps to take, as well as models of practice accompanied by commentaries relating particular pedagogies to their broader personal beliefs and their views on children's languages and abilities, curricular demands, policy expectations, and assessment challenges.

The Translanguaging Classroom: Leveraging Student Bilingualism for Learning provides precisely this important link between new theoretical perspectives on bilingualism and actual classroom practice. It is an important book that will significantly shift and problematize our current approaches to teaching immigrant-origin students in the years to come. I predict, moreover, that, because of this book, how researchers' and educators' view the use and role of language in the education of *all* children, especially language-minority children, will change dramatically as the ideas and practices presented here are discussed, debated, and implemented. At a time when we are engaged in a national conversation about race, inequality, poverty, opportunity, and immigration, this book brings us a groundbreaking and daring pedagogical vision. It invites us to re-examine and change the commonsense everyday classroom practices that we, as teachers and researchers, have used or recommended for (1) the teaching of content and language to immigrant-origin children in regular *and* bilingual education programs and (2) the teaching of monolingual-English-speaking children who hope to acquire a language other than English (LOTE) in two-way, dual-language bilingual programs.

I purposefully refer to the book as presenting a view that is both groundbreaking and daring. I chose *groundbreaking* because the conceptualizations of language that underlie the pedagogical practices proposed here will be both new and unprecedented for many educators. I chose *daring* because the views and perspectives on linguistic multicompetence that inform the proposed approaches to instruction directly challenge established orthodoxies about bilingualism, bilingual children, and the use of two languages in education.

The translanguaging pedagogy described in detail in the text builds directly on García & Li Wei's (2014) book-length work on translanguaging and its role in education, which defines translanguaging as "an approach to the use of language, bilingualism, and the education of bilinguals that considers the language practices of bilinguals not as two autonomous language systems, as has been traditionally the case, but as one linguistic repertoire with features

that have been societally constructed as belonging to two separate languages” (p. 2). In this book the authors describe translanguaging as “a way of *thinking about* and *acting on* the language practices of bilingual people.” They then present a step-by-step guide for a pedagogy that builds on bilingualism itself—in all of its richness and complexity—and that invites teachers to see dual language competency as a repertoire of diverse and complex language practices that can be used and developed in multiple ways in everyday classrooms.

Thinking and *acting differently* about the language practices of bilingual people is fundamental to bringing about change. And change is imperative! Immigrant-origin children, in particular, are facing increasingly difficult challenges. For a number of years, those of us who work on the education of these children have continually looked for ways to call attention to the challenges facing youngsters variously classified as English language learners (ELLs) (Linquanti & Cook, 2013) as they struggle to “learn” English at the same time that they are learning challenging content. We have tried, for example, to describe ELL ghettos to those who, because they do not work in schools, imagine that “teaching” English is a straightforward, race-neutral, apolitical activity. We have also struggled to describe the disappointed faces of students who thought they would have the opportunity to learn, to excel, and to compete academically and their discouragement at being limited to meaningless drills on bits and pieces of language for hours at a time. Unfortunately, as many who spend time in classrooms with ELLs know too well, in many classes and in many schools, there is no access to age-appropriate subject matter content for students classified as ELLs, only hours of worksheets and activities that keep them both busy and quiet. They are tested endlessly, and their progress is evaluated narrowly.

This book challenges the status quo and the well-meaning pedagogies that provide few challenges for pobrecito students. It assumes that students arrive with valuable linguistic capabilities that can be leveraged to develop their fine minds and to further expand their academic and personal competencies by using their full existing language repertoires at all times. It rejects deficit perspectives and approaches to teaching bilingual students, whether emergent or established, and insists on recognizing that their multiple ways of being and speaking are an essential part of their cultural ways of knowing.

In very important ways, *The Translanguaging Classroom: Leveraging Student Bilingualism for Learning*, is by far the most compelling example proposed to date of a *culturally sustaining pedagogy* as defined by Paris (2012, p. 95):

The term *culturally sustaining* requires that our pedagogies be more than responsive of or relevant to the cultural experiences and practices of young people—it requires that they support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence. Culturally sustaining pedagogy, then, has as its explicit goal supporting multilingualism and multiculturalism in practice and perspective for students and teachers. That is, culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling.

As Paris (2012) argues, our search for asset or resource pedagogies, that is, for pedagogies that resist deficit perspectives and seek to honor, explore, and build on the cultures and experiences of minoritized students has been a long and challenging one. All of us, including scholars deeply committed to equity, have found it difficult to convince others to question the deeply embedded notion that students’ heritage and community practices are incompatible with opportunity and academic excellence. Too often, proposed pedagogies for cultural responsiveness or relevance have not necessarily invited students to value what they bring or to proudly continue to use features of their full

linguistic repertoires in both formal and informal oral and written production for a variety of purposes in and out of school.

This book is different. It explicitly takes the position that past scholarship on language has misunderstood the nature of bilingualism and bilingual practices. It insists that students be invited to foster, maintain, and develop their complex repertoires. It invites teachers to reject static views of Language A versus Language B kept separate and pristine. It urges them to engage thoughtfully and joyfully with the richness of multicompetence in children's lives.

We will learn much from this timely and significant book, and from the implementation of the *linguistically sustaining pedagogies* presented here. As these pedagogies are implemented, I predict that the field will engage in challenging and important conversations and debates about the theories and ideologies that are uniquely presented and problematized in this volume. As my class at Stanford makes enormously evident, our understanding of "bilingualism" has shifted in important ways. We now know more, and we now question many established views that had prevented us from seeing the complexity and potential of linguistic flexibility and range. In the case of my students, most of whom are deeply committed to social justice, making a difference in students' lives across their professional careers will require their constant examination and problematization of both established and current theories. It will also require, as Paris (2012) suggested, a clear change in *stance, terminology, and practice*. How we think, how we talk, and how we act matters. I applaud the authors for providing us with a guide for moving forward and sincerely thank them for their deep commitment to the complex, multicompetent voices of the children of the world.

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